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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### SYLLABUS OF INSTRUCTION IN LATIN

#### PRONUNCIATION.

The importance of a correct pronunciation from the outset is likely to be underrated. Pronunciation is regarded as a minor matter, and therefore it often seems permissible, if not necessary, in the press of things, considered more important, to slight it. This is particularly true in the earlier stages of the learner's study of Latin. While he is struggling with the difficulties of inflections, why not let his attention be concentrated on forms? The answer is, because bad habits of pronunciation become easily formed and are corrected with difficulty. Again, if a correct method be pursued, the learner will not often go astray. He may, almost without conscious effort, and almost without any loss of time, be led to pronounce with reasonable correctness. What is the method? It is not the method of pronouncing by rule. The old way of learning rules and practising isolated examples must be abandoned. First, because it is a great waste of time; secondly, because it is opposed to reason; thirdly, because it is uninteresting and even wearisome; and finally, because it is an unfruitful method. The teacher may sometimes give a rule or refer to one, that is, sum up a number of instances that have occurred, with illustration on the blackboard, but his reliance must be almost wholly upon his own example. For a considerable time he should constantly lead. The learner should listen, follow, and imitate; if he goes wrong he should not be corrected first by a rule, but by the pronunciation of the teacher. But it is a great thing to anticipate, and by anticipating to prevent mispronunciations by the learner. There is no way so effectual as for the teacher to

read aloud distinctly, slowly, and with perfect accuracy, in presence of his class, vocabularies assigned to be studied and Latin exercises that are to be read and translated. This brings us naturally to the second topic.

#### READING LATIN TEXTS.

The aim in reading a Latin sentence should be to indicate, so far as may be, the meaning of the original. The first thing to be observed and remembered is, that the word is no longer the unit. The sentence is the unit. Accordingly each member of the sentence, that is, each word, must be uttered with regard to its relation, whether to another word, to a group of words, or to the whole. It now becomes necessary to be heedful of emphasis, of inflection, of cadence, and above all of the grouping of words. Nothing so obscures the sense to the learner, whether he is following by eye or by ear, or by both, as neglect of attention to grouping. Here again, it will be observed, I am assuming that the teacher teaches by example, and does not merely correct the errors of his pupils.

Let the teacher, too, be far more exacting with himself than with his pupils. Let him sometimes read while the pupils close their books and listen. But this exercise should always be on a text that has been studied; at least, till pupils have had a great deal of training of the ear. The learner must have a great deal of practice in reading, without too exigent criticism, to gain fluency. But while he is gaining fluency he is acquiring much besides. He is getting insensibly a feeling for Latin order that will hardly let him go far wrong, when he comes to write Latin. From his reading he gets a better elocutionary drill than is to be obtained from reading English. The first excellence in reading is a complete and clear utterance of words, as distinguished from a clipped, blurred, slovenly pronunciation. If one mumbles the endings of words in Latin, he becomes quickly unintelligible. For endings express relations, and this is appreciated more quickly, constantly, and keenly, when one is reading Latin than when he is reading English.

One word of caution should be spoken. It has already been said that criticism of the reading of pupils should not be too rigorous. In this I refer more particularly to the utterance of

unaccented syllables. It is best, by all means, to have all the exactness practicable. But there are degrees of importance in exactness. It is, for example, much more important that the learner, in pronouncing *amicus*, should pronounce the penult long than that he should pronounce the antepenult short. Teachers should avoid worrying their pupils and themselves on the things of least value. In Latin it becomes all important to distinguish what knowledge is of most worth, because the time allotted to the study is usually so inadequate.

#### INFLECTIONS.

The next thing to be spoken of is inflections. The reading of Latin texts should go on through the course. But the mastery of inflections, that is to the extent of the instant recognition of number, case, person, mode, tense, etc., should be achieved early in the study, or it will never be. Equal readiness in the reverse process, in making forms, or giving the Latin equivalents for English, ought not to be expected; or, if it is exacted, much greater time must be allowed to acquire it than is usual. How shall the requisite familiarity be gained? Mainly through two-fold translation, both oral and written, of short sentences; that is, translation into and from English. In the matter of verbs, practice in the translation of isolated forms seems to be necessary, but this should not be extended to the subjunctive mode. Probably the least efficacious method of all is the one most insisted on, namely the rapid recitation of paradigms. The practice of grouping an adjective and a noun, a noun and a pronoun, or all three, is not sufficiently in vogue, when we consider how often, in reading, such a combination occurs, and how frequently the learner must use such a combination in writing Latin.

#### ORDER.

It has already been remarked incidentally that much reading aloud of Latin will give an unconscious feeling for Latin order. But it will not do to rely wholly upon reading and unconscious absorption. The learner will be helped in writing Latin by some previous systematic instruction. There is not a little in Latin grammars relating to order that is important rather from a rhe-

torical point of view and for declamatory prose, than for such simple narrative as young learners are expected to write. Most teachers will give the needful cautions in respect to the position of certain words; as, *itaque, vero, autem, que*, etc., and in respect to some frequently recurring expressions; as, *honoris causa, populus Romanus, suus quisque*. But frequent attention should be called to the influence of the position of words and clauses, where no fixed rules apply. Particularly the important part that emphasis plays in determining the position of words and of clauses must not be neglected, and in reading Cicero's orations this should be a not unimportant item of the instruction. The habit of alert observation and the training of the ear must do most of the work.

Again a word of caution is needful. Since there is much more freedom in the arrangement of words in a Latin sentence, and also of clauses in a period, than in English, learners sometimes get a notion that, if they begin, in writing a Latin sentence, with the subject, and place the verb at the end, other words may be pitched in, so to speak, in almost any order, provided the arrangement is not the same as in English. The result often is to the practised eye an unintelligible jumble, an unmeaning, fantastic order which is as far from a proper Latin order as from an English one.

#### READING, OR DIVINING THE MEANING.

What is reading? It is taking in the meaning of words and sentences through the eye. It is not necessarily synonymous with translation, though in the study of Latin it is commonly confounded with translation. To translate Latin is to formulate the meaning of the original in the idiom of the English language. The distinction is not an idle one, but of great practical value. Every student of language knows that it is often very hard to put into proper English a thought, the apprehension of which offers no great difficulty, when expressed in another language. Therefore to require a learner to do the two things at once, may, and often does, throw upon him too great a task. It is to the confusion of these two processes that we owe such directions for discovering the meaning of a Latin sentence as the following, taken from a well known work:

"The key to the meaning of any simple sentence will be found in the simple subject and predicate. Hence in looking out the sentence, observe the following order: 1. Take the subject, or nominative. 2. The verb with predicate noun or adjective, if any. 3. The modifiers of the subject, *i. e.*, adjectives agreeing with it, nominatives in apposition with it, genitives depending upon it, etc. 4. The modifiers of the verb, *i. e.*, oblique cases, accusatives, datives, etc., depending upon it, and adverbs qualifying it." Mark in passing, that these directions naively assume as known the very things that have to be discovered.

To discover what is the subject and its modifiers, the predicate and its modifiers, in brief, to divine the meaning, the golden rule is, as has been said in "The Gate to Caesar," "Take words and clauses in the order in which they stand." To this we may add, "Render word by word in total disregard of English idiom." Take this sentence from the first anecdote in "Gradatim." "*Mox miseri pueri tergum vulnerabit monstrum cornigerum.*" "*Soon of the poor boy the back will wound the monster horned.*" It would be a dull boy who would not, after reading what precedes, discover the meaning, and having discovered the meaning, he would be able to translate, "*Soon the poor boy's back will be wounded by the horned monster.*" Or, if you required the construction of the Latin to be made manifest in the translation, which in this case would be reasonable, "*Soon the horned monster will wound the back of the poor boy.*"

#### TRANSLATION.

Reading has been defined to be the discovery of the meaning. Translation may be defined to be the expression of the meaning in correct English. Reading, as an oral process preliminary to translation, has no concern with correct English. Translation is bound by the inviolable law of idiomatic English. Whenever, therefore, what is called a literal rendering would sin against English idiom, it is inadmissible. But a literal rendering is often useful as a test of the learner's knowledge of the construction of the original. It is, in fact, much to be preferred to many questions on syntax to find out what the pupil knows, or does not know. Let it be understood that translation is an exercise in English; but it is also an admirable test of the learner's understanding of what he reads.

But sometimes it is best to devote less time to training in English expression, and sometimes it may be undesirable or unnecessary to subject the learner's knowledge to the particular test of translation. In other words, there may be excellent reasons for much reading without translation. The writer recently read Cicero's *Oratio Pro Milone* in this way. The Latin was read aloud and the thought expressed in condensed form in the pupil's own words. It is almost unnecessary to say that a painful effort to indicate in translation the construction of the original, tends strongly to injure the learner's English style in original composition. On the other hand, an effort to follow the Latin order in disregard of Latin construction is not only less dangerous, because a fault of English order is likely to be felt, but it also has the advantage of sometimes revealing an unsuspected force in an arrangement of words or clauses in English different from the usual one. No Latin scholar can read the works of De Quincey or Ruskin without seeing how profound has been, in this particular, the influence of their Latin studies upon their English style. Translation ought to be reckoned among the fine arts.

#### VOCABULARY.

To acquire an extensive vocabulary the reading of many authors is necessary. But, on the other hand, many authors may be read without putting the learner in possession of anything more than a very meagre vocabulary. This comes from two errors: lack of observation and lack of method. There must be conscious, vigilant, unremitting observation of the uses of words, and perpetual comparison of one meaning with another. The preposition *ab* is used in seven different meanings in the shortest book of Caesar's Gallic War. Besides different meanings of the same word, different words of the same family should be compared. Another useful principle of comparison is that of words unrelated in root but of like meaning. Still another is the comparison of words of opposite meaning.

During the first months of Latin study, or even during the first year, the acquisition of a vocabulary is commonly made a distinct object. Later it is almost as definitely laid aside and forgotten. This will appear the more singular, if we reflect that a knowledge

of the meaning of words is the one thing absolutely requisite for reading in any language, and therefore lies at the root of all progress. The vocabulary of the first year's study should be copious, not meagre. It is a mistake for the learner to deal with but few words at this stage of progress, with the idea that he is to "master" these before he sees others. "Mastering" is not an appropriate term to apply to the act of lodging in the memory the one or two meanings that are set down for words as they are used in exercises for translation into Latin and from Latin. If words were used in beginner's-books with any considerable variety of meanings, the position that the first year's vocabulary should be small, say six hundred words, or *three words for each school day*, would be more defensible. But experience shows that learners seldom carry over from their first year's work more than one meaning of a word. Let the vocabulary of the first year's work be too copious to be "mastered." We do not, in our own language, learn six hundred words and then six hundred more. We get an imperfect knowledge of a great many words and by degrees increase our "mastery," or, more accurately, approach some "mastery."

## SYNONYMS.

Even in the earliest stages of the study of Latin the comparison and distinction of words of similar meaning should not be neglected, and later it should be somewhat systematically pursued. In general it is best to limit the study to words that occur in the learner's reading. When, for instance, the learner has had *vir* and *homo* he is sure to be interested in knowing wherein they differ in meaning, and in what they agree. And if of the Latin verbs meaning "to think," two or three only have occurred, it is better that those only should be distinguished rather than that all the verbs used with that meaning be collected and compared.

## SYNTAX.

A knowledge of the principles of Latin syntax is necessary to the understanding of Latin authors, but the study may easily be carried into minute details to an excessive and unprofitable degree. To many teachers the study of Latin means little more than the study of syntax. But a small part of the instruction in



syntax that deals with Latin texts is effective. Questions on what is translated correctly and intelligently are mostly superfluous and wasteful of time. If discussions of points of syntax in reading Latin were strictly limited to the anticipation and preventing of errors, and to such explanations as are called for to correct mistakes arising from a misunderstanding of constructions, the saving of time would be very considerable. Much more Latin could be read, and much more written. When, however, the learner is set to translate into Latin, he sees, for such an exercise, the value and necessity of a real knowledge of principles of syntax. A direct motive is presented to him for interesting himself in that kind of construction, and for observing usage, as he reads a Latin author.

#### WRITING LATIN.

Two principles may be laid down:—After sufficient practice in turning short sentences into Latin, as a means of learning and fixing forms in the memory, nearly all exercises in translating into Latin should be based upon Latin that has been read and studied. Again, whatever Latin in any author is used thus, as a basis for writing Latin, it should be a continuous text. The learner must become so familiar with the Latin text that he can readily recall the *ipsissima verba* of his author. Obviously such familiarity cannot be expected of more than a moderate quantity of text and frequent reviews cannot be dispensed with. To base exercises, therefore, on a wide area of text is a two-fold error. For it necessitates taking detached parts, here a bit and there a bit, and thus breaks the continuity of association. It also renders reviews, if not impracticable, much less effective.

The study of Latin order has been already referred to, and it has been said that from much reading aloud the learner gets a feeling for order. He should try his own Latin in the same way. The effort to express an idea in Latin imposes at once conscious attention to order, and reacts helpfully by sharpening the perception of the significance of position in the case of words and clauses in a Latin text. Writing therefore is a direct help to reading.

What is the proper relative amount of time to be given to writing Latin? It is not well to carry on exercises in writing Latin while the learner is reading poetry; still less is it well to base exer-

cises in writing prose on verse. This, in fact, should not be thought of. Even when the reading of verse goes on concurrently with writing prose, poetical words and poetical constructions crowd into the memory, and the distinctive characteristics and excellences of prose and verse get blurred and confounded in the mind of the learner. Assuming that the greater part of syntactical instruction will be given in connection with oral and written exercises in translating into Latin, one-third as much time may profitably be spent in this way as in reading.

#### READING AT SIGHT.

Should there be much or little reading at sight? Should it be in connection with the daily lesson? Or should it be dissociated from it in matter and style? What method should be pursued? Reading at sight needs to be defined. It does not mean translating at the first sight of a passage. It does not necessarily imply translating at all. It means discovering the sense without resort to grammar or dictionary. It is largely a process of divination, guided by knowledge and reason. With this understanding of "reading at sight" we are prepared to answer the first question. The more reading at sight the better. It is now wisely made one of the chief immediate ends in the study of Latin. No better mental exercise in linguistic study has yet been devised. It should constitute the first and largest part of the labor of the learner in preparing his daily lesson. It should also occupy a part, say a fourth or a fifth of the recitation period.

The danger is that it will get crowded out of the recitation period; it is therefore better that it should occupy the first, rather than the last, part of the lesson hour.

Secondly, it should be continuous with the assigned lesson. Nothing is gained, but much is lost, by a sudden change to something of unknown context, or unfamiliar style, or strange vocabulary. Moreover, sight reading in class becomes, from the necessity of rapid work, a very strenuous task. It makes severe demands upon the learner, and there is always danger that reading, unconnected with the daily work, will prove too difficult. There is very little easy Latin to be found. It is no valid objection against making the exercise of reading at sight continuous with the assigned lesson, that in this way parts of the book read

will be less thoroughly done than others. It is surely easy, and it is the wisest way, to include what is read impromptu in the next assigned lesson, reckoning as half the amount it actually is. That is, if forty lines is the regular lesson, and if ten have been read at sight, count the ten as five, and assign thirty-five more.

As to the best method of conducting a class exercise, experience has not yet determined all points. First a caution against what is manifestly a pedagogic, or, as Dr. William Everett would have us say, a paideutic error. I refer to the practice, which I believe is a common one, of calling on pupils to translate before they have had time to look through a sentence or paragraph. A little time must be allowed for discovering the drift of a passage. Commonly the pupil will have quite enough to do, if he is first aided by the reading aloud of the passage in the original by the teacher. It may sometimes be necessary that the teacher should repeat his reading, and even repeat again. That must be determined by the difficulty of the passage, or the dullness of the class.

The due emphasis, the intonations, the proper grouping of words by the teacher, often give the precise kind and amount of help required. Add to this such hints as the skillful teacher will know how to give, whether about meaning, or construction, or order.

One additional suggestion may be made. In the process of discovering the meaning, as described under the head of "Reading," it not unfrequently happens that the learner's way is barred by ignorance of the meaning of a single word. He should be taught, in such cases, to pronounce the Latin word in its place, in the midst of the English words of his preliminary translation. Thus, to recur to the illustration already given. The sentence was, *Mox miseri pueri tergum vulnerabit monstrum cornigerum*. The boy says, "*Soon of the poor boy the back will wound—*." He pauses at *monstrum*. The teacher says, "Pronounce the Latin word and go on. The last word means *horned*." The boy resumes, "*Soon of the poor boy the back will wound the monstrum horned*." By the time he has repeated this he will guess the meaning of it. In a surprising number of cases this will prove true; and it is always delightful and stimulating to the learner to guess rightly. The practice of reasoned guessing should be encouraged.

## A COURSE OF READING.

In the study of modern languages it is thought necessary to approach what are called "classics" through a course of simple, easy reading, and this is wise. What is above all needful, after a certain minimum of grammatical study, is a working vocabulary. Now that can be acquired far more rapidly by reading easy books than difficult ones. If the ideas are familiar, if the content of what is read has already been appropriated in English, so much the better. Then almost the whole attention can be concentrated on the vocabulary, the idiom, the form. If this is true of so easy a language as French, it is ten times true of so difficult a language as Latin. Now is it not strange that in this country, where far less time is allowed for Latin than has been found necessary abroad, and where accordingly it becomes all the more important to reduce friction, economize force, and advance by the most gradual and regular steps, so as not to waste a moment's time, it should have become a kind of fashion to try to leap at one bound from the study of forms and simple constructions into a work abounding in difficulties? How long will it be before thinking men and experienced schoolmasters will discover that Caesar's Gallic War, as it stands, is not a suitable book for beginners? It would be far better to put that work near the end of the preparatory course of reading than at the beginning. The old way of taking an easy Latin reader, after a few weeks have been spent on forms, to accompany and supplement the first year's work in Latin, was far better.

It is absurd to insist on Latinity of the purest water. As good Latin is written to-day as that of Nepos, and who objects to Nepos on the score of Latinity? Seeing that the professors of the Latin department at Harvard university for years prescribed certain "Lives" of Nepos as the basis for writing Latin at the entrance examination, schoolmasters need not fear to put Nepos, or any Latin of not inferior excellence, into the hands of their pupils.

It is far more important that the first reading of a boy or girl should be interesting, than that the diction and style should be unimpeachable. For this reason *Viri Romae*, which used to be a favorite, is much to be preferred at the earliest stage to the *Gallic War*. Eutropius, too, and Justin ought to come into

fashion again. The young are easily interested in biography; and the books that have been named have the strong recommendation of interest, and of containing a certain completeness in their parts, which again are not too long for sustained attention.

Add to these considerations the advantage of getting a more varied vocabulary, and consequently a better equipment for subsequent reading. I often wonder whether those persons who think that the work of the first year should be a preparation for Caesar, rather than an introduction to the Latin language, reflect what Caesar leads to. Certainly not to Vergil. Every teacher of experience knows that it is impossible to pass from Caesar to Vergil without a great shock. The learner's previous study seems to count for very little. Vocabulary, content, construction, spirit, style, are utterly different. The difficulty is both disheartening and humiliating. If, however, before Caesar, there comes a fair amount of easier Latin, including a part, at least, of Nepos, the shock in passing from Caesar to some other prose writer is much less rude. The transition from prose to poetry, not easy at the best, should be deferred till the learner has gained a somewhat firmer grasp of the language. Therefore, let something from Cicero precede Vergil. If the colleges would approve the reading of "*De Senectute*" in the schools, I can suggest nothing better. Some stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* might follow, and then a few books of the *Æneid*. It would be well on several accounts to break the reading of the *Æneid* by some months of prose reading; and as Orations of Cicero are almost universally prescribed, the only choice left is among the Orations. Of these the *Pro Roscio Amerino* is much to be preferred for the first reading to the *Catilinarian Orations*. It is more interesting and does not require such a knowledge of Roman political history, of the relations of the different orders in Cicero's time, of the state of society, and of many things besides, that make the task of the immature student too burdensome. He must come to these orations with fuller knowledge of antiquity than can be assumed at an early stage of his preparation. It is, of course, an obvious suggestion that Sallust's *Catiline* should be read before the *Catilinarian Orations*.

Such a course of reading as has been outlined ought not, however, to be permanent, particularly in its more advanced parts.

Changes should be made in college requirements or recommendations in Latin more slowly than they are in the English requirements, but in the same way; now one work should be substituted, now another. What a benefit would not this simple expedient bring about in the wider and more varied reading of teachers, by which their knowledge of Latin would be extended, their teaching power enforced, and fresh enthusiasm gained!

Will not classical teachers unite to bring about a change so simple, so reasonable, so helpful, so much to be desired?

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## THE CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR THE SUCCESSFUL TEACHING OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

Prof. Wendell very happily touches\* the main difference between the teaching of English and the teaching of the other subjects of secondary and upper education. English, he shows, is not a specialty, but the accomplishment of all educated persons, whatever their employment or social position. Everything else is a mystery; its devotees are special craftsmen. The chemist may ignore astronomy and history, and forget his Greek. The linguist cares nothing for political economy. But chemist, linguist, astronomer and historian must all pay homage to their English, and, at least as students in the secondary range of education, must undergo the same training, and with the same ends in view. Only the student of philology proper has a justification for specializing his English. But the philology of the native language is a science quite unconcerned with the power of expression and of literary interpretation.

The student of English seeks to become acquainted with that which everybody knows. The student of every other subject seeks

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\* In his paper on "English in Secondary Schools," read before the New England Association of College and Preparatory Schools, at New Haven, Oct. 14, 1893.